

believed the general to be sincerely Republican
only wished
Mm to relieve them of certain men of the hour,
such, as
President GreVy, for rumours were already
abroad respecting
the nefarious practices of the latter's son-in-law,
M. Wilson.
But others were intent on purposes of their
own, the over-
throw of the Republic and the establishment of
a monarchy
or a dictatorship, into which enterprise they
hoped to
inveigle the popular ex-Minister of War.
Briefly, at this
time a great crisis was gradually approaching.

Nevertheless, though the unrest penetrated
to the literary
world, the latter did not neglect the subjects
which more
particularly concerned it, and there was some
commotion
among men of letters when on August 18 that
year (1887)
" Le Figaro" published a manifesto directed
against Zola's
new work, which had been appearing in the "
Gil Bias "
since May, and the concluding pages of
which were at
that very moment being written at Me"dan. This
manifesto
(which, when one recalls the presumptuous
preface to " Les
Soirees de Me*dan," may be regarded as a
Roland for an
Oliver) was signed by five young writers, Paul
Bonnetain,
J. H. Rosny, Lucien Descaves, Paul Margueritte,
and Gustave
Guiches, who, " in the name of their supreme
respect for art,
protested against a literature devoid of all
nobility." The

factum was of some length, diffuse, bristling with scientific jargon, and disfigured by a ridiculous attack on the personal appearance of Zola, whose leadership these young men solemnly renounced.

At that time the best known of the five was Paul Bonnetain, a Provencal of Mmes, and a friend of Alphonse Daudet, who came from the same city. Bonnetain had then published four or five books, the first of which, " Chariot